

VZCZCXRO1741  
PP RUEHDE  
DE RUEHGB #3907/01 3360246  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 020246Z DEC 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4601  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003907

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/23/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [ECON](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: BAGHDAD EPRT: OMAR AL-JABOORI HOSTS RECONCILIATION  
MEETING, COVERS IDPS, AMNESTY, MEDIA COVERAGE

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2670  
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 3013  
[1](#)C. BAGHDAD 3710  
[1](#)D. BAGHDAD 3711  
[1](#)E. BAGHDAD 3712

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Classified By: E-PRT Leader Eric Whitaker, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is a Baghdad 2 Brigade E-PRT reporting cable.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: Sheikh Omar Al-Jaboori, Human Rights Advisor to Vice President Tariq Al-Hashimi, hosted a November 13 meeting as part of a series of on-going discussions with the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and E-PRT (reftels A - E). The meeting featured the participation of the District Council chairs of 9 Nissan, Karada, and Rusafa. Discussion focused on community reconciliation efforts, the need to publicize such undertakings, the need for amnesty for Sunni detainees, encouraging the return of IDPs, the effectiveness of Sunni efforts to eliminate Al-Qaida from Baghdad, and Sunni participation in neighborhood and district councils. End summary.

[1](#)3. (C) Sheikh Omar Al-Jaboori, Human Rights Advisor to Vice President Tariq Al-Hashimi, Dr. Kheder Shukur, and six Sunni representatives hosted BCT Effects Cell Coordinator, Human Terrain Team Leader, and E-PRT Leader as well as the Karada, Rusafa, and 9 Nissan District Council Chairs in a three and one-half hour meeting on November 13 at VP Al-Hashimi's residence in the International Zone.

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9 Nissan DC Chair: Cultures of Unity and of Separatism  
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[1](#)4. (C) After introductions, 9 Nissan District Council Chair Sheikh Kamal Joda noted the presence of both cultures of unity and of separatism within his district. He underscored the importance of marginalizing the latter, and of building reconciliation efforts from a grassroots origin. If enough individuals want results, he said, they will press leaders to solve reconciliation issues. This process should proceed in stages.

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Rusafa DC Chair: Support Brotherhood and Nationhood  
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[1](#)5. (C) Rusafa District Council Chair Jamal Khalaf said that political parties should cool things down, and concentrate on supporting the notions of brotherhood and nationhood. There is no need for Iraqis to hurt each other; such ideas are from abroad, and have caused a sickness inside Iraq. He used the once-feuding Rusafa neighborhoods of Al-Fadhil and Abu Saifan

as an example. The problem was dealt with, foreign fighters had been removed, and people had worked to remove barriers between them.

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Karada DC Chair: Urban vs. Tribal, Many Incidents Noted  
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¶6. (C) Finally, Karada District Council Chair Mohammed Al-Rubeiy said that the district was known as a good, secure area, where many political leaders live. Yet it is a mixed district, and he often sees his role as holding the Karada stick in the middle, with the peninsula on one end and Zafaraniya on the other. The district has both urban and tribal populations, and hosts numerous internally displaced persons (IDPs), perhaps as many as 5850 families. The district has also suffered from more attacks than most realize, with 86 incidents of violence, including 119 fatalities and over 300 injured, Mohammed noted, more than Sadr City.

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Al-Jaboori Themes: Reconciliation, Publicity, Amnesty  
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¶7. (C) Al-Jaboori thanked them for their observations, and noted that people were moving back to their homes gradually. This is due in part to the improving security conditions, wherein Al-Qaida is now "95 percent" removed from the city of Baghdad. Al-Jaboori then listed four key issues:

-- Continued holding of reconciliation meetings, building to a national reconciliation conference. Security is improving, and there is no place any longer for militias; nothing remains between the Shias and Sunnis;

-- Publicizing progress being made in community-level

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reconciliation through media coverage;

-- Efforts to assist IDPs in returning to their homes, particularly in 9 Nissan (Note: both Karada and Rusafa were discussed and regarded as IDP hosting areas, rather than sources. End note.); and

-- An amnesty program so that detainees could be freed in cases where no evidence of guilt was present. According to Al-Jaboori, this would encompass roughly 60 percent of the 60,000 held ) per his estimates.

¶8. (C) The E-PRT Leader spoke of the importance of broad civil society involvement in community reconciliation, and defined it as including clerics, traditional leaders, media, academics, professional associations, labor, women's and children's groups, NGOs, and commerce. The E-PRT Leader pledged to sponsor community reconciliation/civil society forums in each of the three districts to help catalyze this process.

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Dr. Kheder: Sunnis Killed their Own for Joining AQI  
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¶9. (C) Dr. Kheder Shukur introduced the local Sunni representatives, and encouraged the district council chairs to take advantage of them as contacts and representatives of the Sunni populations within their areas. He said the Sunni representatives "prove themselves by their work." Dr. Kheder said that Al-Qaida had "got us," and noted that progressive Sunnis had "killed their own for joining Al-Qaida."

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Jamal: Have to Admit Mistakes to Build Common Future  
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¶10. (C) Rusafa DC Chair Jamal interjected that both sides have to admit their past mistakes in order to build a common future. Karada DC Chair Mohammed said that the concept of district councils is new, but that members had participated in training and were filling local needs for governance. DC members, he said, are "hidden soldiers for the government."

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Greater Sunni Representation on NCs and DCs Sought  
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¶11. (C) Discussion continued over Sunni aspirations for greater representation in neighborhood and district councils. None of the district council chairs was opposed, and openness to Sunni candidates was apparent. The mechanism of replacing the original, appointed members, however, was described as problematic, as the Provincial Council had failed to act on 15 NC replacements sent for ratification in July 2007. All agreed, however, to work toward a mutual solution.

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Al-Jaboori Seeks "Strategic, Diplomatic Dialogue"  
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¶12. (C) At the end of the meeting, the parties agreed to meet again. (Note: in an aside prior to the meeting, Al-Jaboori advised E-PRT Leader that he wished for a "strategic, diplomatic partnership" with the United States. Al-Jaboori also made it clear that he is interested in a national-level reconciliation event to draw attention to ongoing efforts at the local level. End note.)  
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